

I/DD 101: An Introductory Guide to Intellectual and/or Developmental Disabilities

Intellectual and/or Developmental Disabilities (I/DD) as defined in California's Lanterman Act:

A developmental disability means a disability that starts before the age of 18, is expected to last a lifetime, and is a substantial disability. It specifically includes diagnoses such as an intellectual disability, cerebral palsy, epilepsy, autism, and other conditions that require similar treatment as those with intellectual disability.

Lanterman Act: A Legal Right to Supports and Services

The **Lanterman Developmental Disabilities Services Act** is California's landmark law that establishes a legal right for people with I/DD to receive the services and supports they need to live as independently and as inclusively as possible.

Enacted in 1969, it guarantees an entitlement to individualized, person-centered services through the state's Regional Center system once eligibility is established.

The Act affirms key principles, including:

- The right to dignity, privacy, and humane care
- Participation in decisions about one's own life
- Services in the least restrictive, most integrated setting
- Planning through an Individual Program Plan (IPP)
- Due process rights (such as appeals if services are denied or reduced)

The Act emphasizes community integration, self-determination, and support across a person's lifespan. And it establishes the Regional Center system, which is administered, overseen, and funded by the state Department of Developmental Services (DDS).



In California, 525,000 people with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities receive services from the statewide network of 21 Regional Centers, serving every regional of California.

People with developmental disabilities and their families want the same things as anyone else - equal opportunities, good health care, good housing, and good jobs.